

# TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

established 1904.

## BULLETIN

<http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/tasfield/>

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The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal *The Tasmanian Naturalist* annually in October. People with a range of ages, background and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Genevieve Gates (6227 8638) for further information or GPO Box 68A, Hobart, 7001.

### Program

General Meetings start at 7.45 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month, in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting outside the to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery entrance in Macquarie Street. Bring lunch and all-weather outdoor gear.

*If you are planning to attend an outing but have not been to the prior meeting, phone to check as to the timing of the excursion (with Genevieve Gates; 62 278 638 or Don Hird; 62 344 293). Unforeseen changes sometimes occur.*

Thurs. 2 November. 7.45p.m.: Stuart Frusher from the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute will speak about that much sought species; the Rock Lobster or Crayfish in Tasmania. Rock Lobster has been important not just in the current and historical economies of Tasmania, but in the indigenous economies before European arrival.

November weekend from 6.00 p.m on Friday November 3, we will meet at the University facility "Tasman House" approx. 2km past Koonya on Tasman Peninsula (Turn right at the Nubeena turnoff just past Taranna). From 9.00 a.m on the Saturday we will visit the Lime Bay area, which is both attractive in itself and a renowned orchid location in November. Easy to moderate walking is involved. There will be spotlighting on the Saturday evening and a coastal walk on the Sunday morning. There is a modest charge for accommodation or bring your own tent. Confirm details prior if not attending the meeting.

Thurs. 7 December Members' Night and (we hope) the launch of *Tasmanian Jewel Beetles*, subject to its printing by then. As usual, members are encouraged to contribute a personal item of natural history interest, e.g. some slides of a private or club trip, a specimen or etc.

December Excurs. 9.00 a.m.: Saturday or Sunday TBA. Snug Tier is an area where a number of habitats converge and an excursion can be varied on the day according to conditions. Both the area and the time of year should be prospective for jewel beetles, other insects and wildflowers.

Thurs. 1 Feb. 2001 TBA see the January Bulletin.

## FLINDERS ISLAND FEDERATION TRIP 22-6 SEPTEMBER 2000

by Kevin Bonham

Although plagued by chaos following the collapse of Island Airlines, the Flinders Island Federation trip finally went ahead, with 15 Field Nats attending. Amanda Thomson and I were the only Hobart members present. Despite various hassles on the ground (take cash when visiting Flinders; non-cash transactions are difficult) we covered a lot of ground and had an excellent trip. Sites we visited included Mt Strzelecki, Wybalena, North-East River, Walkers Lookout, Vinegar Hill, Badger Corner, Pickford Creek, Camerons Inlet (a beachwalk with the Wind Festival group), Wingaroo Reserve and Mount Tanner. Two members even volunteered to count Cape Barren Geese on Mt Chappel and Badger Islands!

Orchids were plentiful with 18 spp. in flower. Amanda and Alma McKay found *Chiloglottis trapeziformis* at Pickford Creek. This amazed us as "Orchids of Tasmania" gives just two Tasmanian localities, but it turns out that Hans Wapstra found the exact same colony last year! I dragged everyone down to Badger Corner to look for a *Prasophyllum* I'd seen in 1986. It's very odd to find *Prasophyllum* flowering in September, and the specimens we collected have been seen by David Jones and may well be a new species. Other highlights included the spider orchid *Caladenia clavigera*, the rock orchid *Dockrillia striolata* and the unusual red-flowered greenhood *Pterostylis sanguinea*.

I found 13 snail species, one of them (*Pupilla australis* at Wybalena) being a new record for the island (though it has been found on other Furneaux islands). Flinders has three very distinctive endemic snails and I found many specimens of these. I also collected millipedes, with mixed results: my species tally of 4 was abysmally low (what looked to be several species were just growth stages of two abundant ones), but one species was a new record for the island and another is probably a new record for the state!

Finds on the beachwalk included seven(!) sea-dragons, and a piece of a large tun shell, a group rarely recorded in Tasmanian waters. In general, Flinders is an excellent natural history location and I'm impressed at how much bush there is still intact.

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### Excursion Report – Whaler's Lookout: 07 October 2000

Spring 2000 has been a season of winds and the day of the October excursion proved to be no exception. Seven members and a visitor, with a range of ages of around 7 decades, set out for this coastal feature at the southern end of Mercury Passage.

Whaler's Lookout is just south of Cockle Bay Lagoon, an interesting looking tidal inlet separated from the sea by a broad pebbly bar, except where a channel which was forded connects the two bodies of water. As this area is some three hours walk south of the departure point, little time was spent in fossicking for specimens along the way.

Some notable observations in the Whaler's Lookout area were a very large-trunked native olive, *Notolea ligustrina* growing in splendid isolation on the pebbly bar just above the high tide mark. An unusual wildflower in bloom was the Forest Germander, *Teucrium corymbosum*, on the steep slopes of the lookout. Persistent squalls prevented effective searching for marine birds or mammals, although gannets were diving in more sheltered areas.

In farmland on our return a flock of several hundred white-fronted chat was seen wheeling and settling in the pasture. An enjoyable day was had despite the lunchtime showers, the winds and a small boy's spectacular fall, with Olympic zeal, into a large muddy puddle.

Photographs of the Flinders Island Federation Excursion and the September excursion are now on the Internet, see the Club's website address at the head of this bulletin.

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Don Hird

known radio naturalist and journalist. Besides their vast knowledge and experience, all three were full of fun, and all-round entertainers, so this was a specially memorable camp.

A full-time cook with 1 or 2 assistants provided all meals. Charley, an ex-Navy cook catered for the first 7 or 8 camps, and a genuine French chef, Andre, for the last few. A feature of all the camps was that at 7 a.m. every day, Sargie went round all the tents with an enormous tea-pot, 2 feet diameter and 2 feet high, handing a cup of tea to each camper.

There were always plenty of young people at camp. Among them were Peter Dombrovskis, David Ziegeler, and David Milledge, now prominent as nature photographer, botanist, and ornithologist respectively. It is tempting to think that their experiences at the camps did help them to develop the outstanding abilities they now have. Certainly many youngsters were initiated into the joys of natural history and the bush.

When Sargie became unable to organize the camps, it was felt that nobody else would be able to take on such a formidable task. The camps lapsed and the gear was sold. The TFNC flourishes, with excellent scientific direction, lectures, trips, scientific publications, conservation and enjoyment, but the days of Sargie's Easter Camps are gone forever. Those who took part will never forget them.

Kelsey Aves

Supplement to Tasmanian Field Naturalists' Club *Bulletin* # 300,  
October 2000

## SARGIE

And

### THE TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB EASTER CAMPS

Harold F. Sargison, known to almost everyone as 'Sargie', was a jeweller who had a small shop in Elizabeth Street, next door to our (optometrical) practice, then at number 15. His shop was coveted by the AMP Society for the use of the site as part of their new building, and eventually they had their way, and the shop disappeared. Sargie, aged 82, moving to Liverpool Street. He was a master craftsman in silver and gold and made the Mace for the Tasmanian Parliament. For a presentation from the TFNC to me, he made a beautiful paperknife of beaten silver, with my initials in gold-leaf. Silver spoons, trays etc. were made as regular lines for sale. A large grandfather clock in the shop had been entirely made by him, even to the cutting of the tiniest cogwheel.

He was a tall, lantern-jawed man with apparently boundless energy and a passion to do-it-yourself. His large, steeply sloped garden in New Town had about six transverse terraces with a self contained unit half way up. At the top of the garden was a large chicken coop and cage big enough for eagles and a couple of garages with loft and home-made lifting access ladder so balanced that it could be controlled with a finger-tip, a ballroom overlooking the whole of Hobart, and a large shed. This was serviced down to the road by a railway of about 2 foot gauge with a truck which was hoisted up and down by a cable worked by a large electric motor in the shed.

Inconceivable as it may seem, all of these buildings and works had been constructed by Sargie. The shed was stacked with tons (literally) of camping gear. And thereby hangs a tale.

Sargie was a dedicated Rotarian and though he claimed to be no speaker, any practical work that needed to be done was done by Sargie. But his even greater passion was the Tasmanian Field Naturalists' Club Easter Camps. The TFNC, from its beginning in 1905, had held a large Camp every Easter for members to enjoy field studies in natural history and of course have a general good time. They were very popular and were led by famous people - Leonard Rodway, botanist, A.N. Lewis, geologist, Clive Lord, zoologist, Prof. Flynn, marine biologist and father of film star, Erroll (who also came to the camps) and many others. But the camps ceased at the start of the war with Japan, which was soon after I arrived in Tasmania. Sargie had been active in these camps and when the war was over he suggested that they be resumed, and the first post-war camp was held in 1946 at Safety Cove. I did not attend this one, but the following year it was at Adventure Bay on Bruny Island, and at this camp and the 12 following ones a totally new experience was opened to me.

Sargie's organization of the camps followed a general pattern. A week before Easter, on the Saturday, a band of volunteers loaded a lorry at Sargie's place with all the impedimenta of the camp (about 5 tons of it), first having to load it onto Sargie's railway truck to send it down to the road. On the Monday the lorry delivered this gear to an 'advance party' at the chosen site, and it was off-loaded by the already ensconced volunteers of the advance party. Then there were 5 days of intense activity to have all tents, dining and kitchen marquees erected, mattresses stuffed with straw, kitchen equipment and provisions prepared, latrines dug and a water tank installed and

filled. All this was hard work, but very satisfying as the tent-town took shape, ready for the 60 to 90 people to arrive by bus and cars late on Thursday evening. Coffee and scones awaited them before they turned in. On the Tuesday the whole camp broke up and loaded the lorry, which was unloaded at Sargie's home again next day by the usual volunteers and railed up to the shed ready for next year. During the year Sargie repaired, maintained and added to all the equipment.

For my first Camp, at Adventure Bay, I decided to join the advance party, and since this camp was on Bruny Island, all the gear had to be off-loaded from the lorry onto the channel steamer, then back onto another lorry at Alonnah, and then off-loaded again at Adventure Bay. However, the site was an excellent one and lent itself to historical talks of the early explorers who had anchored and landed there, as well as the natural history, which was fascinating. We even re-enacted the landing of Capt. Bligh and Lt. Matthew Flinders, who were welcomed by charmers dressed in sea-weed! Each evening there were talks and sing-songs around the camp-fire under the Easter moon, and on the final night a grand concert in the marquee, with impromptu lighthearted skits on events and people in camp. Quite astonishing talents emerged. Over the next 12 years, Easter Camps were held at Eaglehawk Neck (2), Saltwater River (2), Wilmot Harbour, Stewarts Bay, Rheban (2), Swansea, Safety Cove, Marion Bay and Lake St. Clair. Michael Sharland ('Peregrine' of The Mercury) usually organized the natural history excursions, and the more knowledgeable members in botany, ornithology, entomology and geology pooled their results for talks and exhibits of the day's findings around the camp-fire in the evening. The 1955 Camp at Safety Cove was a celebration of the Club's 50th birthday, and for this camp 3 mainland scientists were our special guests - Jim Willis, botanist in charge of Melbourne Herbarium, Edmund Gill, geologist of Brisbane Museum & Phil Crosbie-Morrison, well